

trade and investment. Furthermore, Singapore will provide U.S. investors with important substantive protections that Singaporean investors already enjoy in the United States.

Singapore and the United States have also agreed to cooperate on the environment and labor issues and to establish mechanisms to support those efforts. The FTA obligates each country to enforce its own labor and environmental laws and makes clear that domestic labor or environmental protections may not be reduced in order to encourage trade or investment. The Agreement also preserves our right to pursue other legitimate domestic objectives, including the protection of health and safety, consumer interests, and national security.

Trade and openness contribute to development, the rule of law, economic growth, and international cooperation. Singapore is a close partner of the United States, and this Agreement will strengthen those ties.

With the approval of this Agreement and passage of the implementing legislation by the Congress, we will advance U.S. economic, security, and political interests, while encouraging others to work with us to expand free trade around the world.

George W. Bush

The White House,
July 15, 2003.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Requests To Change Appropriations Law and a Budget Amendment for the Department of Veterans Affairs

July 15, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed requests to change FY 2003 appropriations law and an FY 2004 budget amendment for the Department of Veterans Affairs, none of which will affect budget levels.

The details of these requests are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 16. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks to Urban Leaders

July 16, 2003

I thank you all for coming. I'm joined by some pretty distinguished company up here. I want to thank my friends the social entrepreneurs of America—[*laughter*—for standing up here today. I want to talk about a couple of subjects.

First, I want to introduce Condoleezza Rice, my National Security Adviser, who, as I understand it, is going to stay afterwards and answer some questions about our trip, that I appreciate you doing.

Let's talk about the values that make our country unique and different. We love freedom here in America. We believe freedom is God's gift to every single individual, and we believe in the worth of each individual. We believe in human dignity, and we believe where we find hopelessness and suffering, we shall not turn our back. That's what we believe.

And there are—in this land of plenty, there are people who hurt, people who wonder whether or not the American experience, what they call the American Dream, is meant for them. And I believe the American Dream is meant for everybody. And when we find there's doubt, we've got to bring light and hope, and so that's what we're here to talk about today. And the men up here represent a representative sample of what we call the faith community in America, people who first and foremost have been called because of a calling much higher than government.

I say "social entrepreneurs" because, in many of our faith institutions, we find people who are willing to reach out in the neighborhood in which they exist to help those who hurt and those who are in need. They're willing to take a new tack, a tack based upon faith, to heal hearts and provide hope and provide inspiration, so that the American Dream is available in every corner in America. And where we find those programs which are effective, society ought to support those programs.

What I'm saying is, we ought not to fear faith. We ought not to discriminate against faith-based programs. We ought to welcome what I call neighborhood healers in the compassionate delivery of help so that people can experience the greatness of our country.

Of course, that then leads to the question of public money, taxpayers' money. My attitude is, taxpayers' money should and must fund effective programs, effective faith-based programs, so long as those services go to anybody in need. We ought to focus on—we ought to ask the question in our society, "Is the faith-based program working," not focus on the fact that it's a faith-based program.

The Government, as it gives support, as it provides help to the faith-based program and in return asks for help for solving social problems, as it does that, it should never discriminate. It should never cause the faith-based program to lose its character or to compromise the mission. That's the basic principles of the Faith-Based Initiative which you've heard a lot about. Really what we're doing is, we're signing up the armies of compassion which already exist and saying, "What can we do to help you fulfill your calling and your mission?" That's really what we're doing.

I signed an Executive order banning discrimination against faith-based charities by Federal agencies. We waited for Congress to act. They couldn't act on the issue. So I just went ahead and signed an Executive order which will unleash—which says the Federal agencies will not discriminate against faith-based programs. They ought to welcome the armies of compassion as opposed to turning them away.

I know you've heard from some of my key Cabinet Secretaries. Within their secretariat are offices designed to speak up for, defend, and empower faith-based groups, specially created within the bureaucracy.

Look, I fully understand the issue, the frustration some face. And it's a frustration based upon a long practice here at the Federal level, and that is, there's no place for faith-based programs and trying to help people in need. And therefore, we'll discriminate, shove out of the way, not deal with, make it hard for, create barriers to entry. And my administration is absolutely committed to

reducing those barriers to entry. And we've created these offices whose sole function it is to, one, recognize the power of faith and, two, recognize there are fantastic programs all throughout the country on a variety of subjects, all based upon faith, all changing lives, all making American life better, and therefore, folks would be enlisted in making sure the American Dream extends throughout our society.

And let me give you some examples, particularly those who might be tuning in to this moment. People—"What do you mean by faith-based discrimination?" Well, in Seattle, there was an earthquake, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency gave disaster relief funds to schools but denied them to the Seattle Hebrew Academy. In other words, schools—public schools got the funds from FEMA, but not a religious school. And so, we've changed that rule. That's the kind of discrimination that I—that may make some sense to people who are not exactly sure what I'm talking about.

Another interesting example is, in Boston, the Old North Church, the famous historic landmark, needed preservation funds; yet it was denied Federal help because it was a church. And that's not right. That's not right. It makes no sense, and therefore, we're changing those kinds of rules.

And we're also making sure that Federal monies are available. It's one thing to talk about a Faith-Based Initiative, but there needs to be money in the system available for the faith-based programs in order for—to make it work. And that's money that's coming out of these agencies already. I mean, there's—we spend a lot of money here in Washington, and that—monies ought to be accessible to effective faith-based programs which heal people from all walks of life. It's—money is not going to proselytize; money is going to save lives.

And let me give you some examples of what is working today, maybe examples that you already have heard about, particularly when you go to the White House conferences as we try to describe how to access the system.

In Columbus, Ohio, St. Stephen's Community House—faith-based program—is

using a—nearly \$1 million from the Department of Education to expand its after-school program. There's kind of an interesting use of education dollars that will help faith-based programs fulfill their mission.

The Frederick Douglass Community Development Corporation, started by the Memorial AME Zion Church in Rochester, New York, has received more than \$5 million from HUD to build low-income houses for seniors. The AME Church decided to do something about the housing issue, as far as the seniors go in their congregation, and accessed Federal money and put together a housing project. Now a lot of people don't—when they think about the AME Church or any church for that matter, they don't think housing. Except I know some social entrepreneurs from my State—right, Evans?²—[laughter]—who have used their facilities, their skills to go ahead and to build homes.

The Operation New Hope and City Center Ministries in Jacksonville, Florida, and the Exodus Transitional Community in East Harlem went to the Department of Labor, and they received labor funds for job training programs for ex-offenders. A person gets out of prison, checks in at the church, and the church says, "Wait, we want to help you get back into society; not only will there be some lessons to be learned, but also, here's some training money. Here's a training course." So it's a practical application of taxpayers' money to meet societal needs. And one of the greatest societal needs is we have is to make sure our—you know, a guy who's spent time in the pen not only receives spiritual guidance and love, but spiritual guidance and love can only go so far. And it's also helpful to have him be trained in a job which exists. In other words, there's practical application of taxpayers' money that we want to get into the hands of our faith-based organizations all throughout our society.

People say, "Well, we're already doing that." Now, what's happening is that the same programs are being funded over and over and over again. In other words, there's kind of a rut. And that doesn't encourage the entrepreneurial spirit that we're interested in.

So one of the things we've done here in the White House to deal with this issue is

we've started—and Jim Towey is—we've got an office dedicated, by the way, to the Faith-Based Initiative. And we've started White House conferences to explain to people how the process works. And Towey handed me this book when I came in. These are the different pots of money, if you will, that are accessible to the faith community so that you can help fund the programs.

Now, look, we've got to do a better job of making sure that we explain what we mean by the Faith-Based Initiative. I understand that. It requires education. People can read everything they want into it. When they hear "Faith-Based Initiative," they—that all of a sudden opens everybody's imagination in the world to vast possibilities, some which exist and some which don't. [Laughter]

And so therefore we're reaching out to explain to people the practical applications. The Compassion—Capital Compassion Fund, which Congress has funded—I've asked for \$100 million; they gave it 30 million and 35 million over the last 2 years—but that money goes to help smaller charities learn how to fill out grants, learn what it means to access Federal monies.

It's one thing for people, however, to learn how to fill out a grant. It's another thing to have the grant fall on deaf ears. So we're also changing habits here in Washington, DC. And that's what the office of the—within these departments are all designed to do, to facilitate, to make it easier for people to access, to make sure that we really do tap the heart and soul of our country.

Evans—Tony Evans first kind of woke me up to this. We were in Greenville, Texas, together, and he said, "The best welfare programs already exist on the street corners of inner-city Dallas," in this case. "They're open 24 hours a day. They've got a fantastic guidebook"—[laughter]—"been around a long time." [Laughter] "The motto of the work force is clear: Love your neighbor." And it dawned on me how true he is. There's no need to reinvent. We've got it in place. And so therefore, when I lay out an initiative that talks about saving the lives of drug offenders, really what I'm saying is, is that I understand that when you change a person's heart, you can change their habits. So let's enlist it, the

faith community, on the goal of saving people's lives who happen to be hooked on drugs.

Six hundred million dollars over 3 years—I would hope that the faith community gets very much involved when Congress funds this. And by the way, part of this mission is for me to remind Congress they need to fund it. But once funded, it's very important for the faith community to be involved. The 10-step program is a faith initiative, when you really think about the—how it works. And I know many of you who run churches and synagogues and mosques in America are worried about addiction in your neighborhoods. And we want to help because we believe—we know—that some of the most effective programs are those that work when a heart is changed.

I've also laid out a mentoring initiative. I would love to have every child who has a mother or dad in prison to have a mentor. The most vulnerable of our population are those who may have a mom or a dad incarcerated. And they need love. They need a lot of love. And the best way to provide love is to find somebody who's willing to love them through a mentoring program.

I went to the Amachi program in Philadelphia—perhaps you all know about it—out of the Bright Hope Baptist Church, saw the program that works. There's a lot of initiatives around from the faith-based program that track the child who needs to be mentored. And the best place to find mentors, of course, is you can find them every Sunday. But we need help to make sure the program works. And so Congress I've asked to get this program moving.

My point is, we've got some Federal initiatives, job training, education, addiction. We've got a housing initiative here, by the way, that I'm deeply concerned about, what they call a minority gap in America. Too many—relative to the Anglo community, too many minorities don't own their own homes. I believe in an ownership society. I know when somebody owns their home, they've got such a fantastic stake in the future.

The faith community can help in homeownership. The Federal Government's got to help a lot here. We've got to make sure there is more affordable homes. We've got to pro-

vide tax incentives for people to build homes in inner cities. We've got to have downpayment help. And we've got to make sure that the contracts—I can understand somebody, a first-time homebuyer, getting a little nervous when they pull up the contract and the print's about that big, and nobody understands what's in the print. And a lot of people don't want to sign something they're not sure what it's about. And so we've got education programs through our housing institutions to teach people what it means to buy a home and how to help them access the downpayment help and also to make sure the contracts are clear and understandable.

This is a mission at home, is to help people. And you know, Government can help. I like to say, Government can pass out money, but it cannot put hope in people's hearts or purpose in people's lives. And that's why it's vital for our country to count on those who can put hope in people's hearts and a sense of purpose in people's lives, and that's our faith community.

You know, we will accomplish a lot here at home if we use all the resources available to our communities. And I will tell—continue to tell the American people, one of the great untapped resources for Government is to work side by side with the faith community. And I want to thank you all for your—hearing the call.

Now, look, before I end, I do want to also remind you that we will not turn our back on people who suffer in the world as well. I have just come from Africa, and I'd like to share some thoughts, if you don't mind.

First—and Condi was traveling with me, of course. I don't dare go overseas without her. *[Laughter]* At Goree Island, we stood at the Point of No Return, and it was a moving moment for our entire delegation. I went to Auschwitz earlier, and then I went to here, and it reminded me of the capacity for mankind to be cruel.

But the interesting thing that I've come to realize, that I spoke at Goree Island, was, those who were sent to America as slaves and their ancestors who lived in a segregated society stood strong, never gave up faith, and in fact, helped America find her soul and her conscience.

It's an interesting historical twist, when you think about it. Those who were chained, sent in those ships, separated from their families, those who were really beaten down, never lost their spirit, never lost their desire for freedom and hope, stood strong in the face of the oppressor, finally made the oppressor feel guilty, and in fact made us realize what it meant, "liberty and justice for all."

South Africa and Botswana and Uganda and Nigeria—and by the way, it took a long time to fly from Senegal to South Africa. [Laughter] It took longer to fly from Senegal to South Africa than it took from America to Senegal, which means we're covering a lot of country. [Laughter]

It's a continent of vast potential, is the way I'd like to describe it, a continent of possibility. And it's in our national interest that Africa do well. Africa has got to deal with a lot of issues. And first of all, the policy of this Government is to understand Africans are plenty capable of dealing with issues themselves; they just need help.

So for example, when it comes to helping deal with regional conflicts, one of the things we've got to do is help train their militaries so that they've got the capacity to move in and separate warring factions. One of the problems Africa faces, of course, is there is—every time there's a civil war, there's a lot of hurt, death, displacement. It makes it awfully hard for a society to function that is at war with itself, as you know.

In those countries, I was struck by its potential and struck by the issues that are faced, one—education issues and health issues of course—no bigger issue in my judgment, however, than the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. And we live in an amazing world, and yet in the midst of our world, there's a lot of folks who are dying and will die. And it's time for the United States of America to act and act in a big way, which is what we're going to do.

Reverend Rivers went over just to make sure that I fulfilled my promise. He was watching my every move. [Laughter] I asked for 15 billion. Now let me just give you a quick update; then Condi will be glad to answer any other questions you have about the trip.

Some countries are prepared for our aid. As a matter of fact, a lot of countries are. And that was a very important question to ask. If in fact we fund—and we will fund, and I want to thank you for your help in convincing Congress that they've got to fund the initiative. As you know, we have authorized it. Now they've got to write the check. And we will—we will. But it was very important for us to see whether or not the—for example, the capacity to distribute antiretrovirals was in place. Nothing worse than stockpiling medicines that never get distributed to the actual people. We're not interested in helping organizations. We're interested in helping organizations actually get the medicine to the people.

And we saw a good infrastructure. The Catholic Church, for example, in Uganda is fully prepared to pave the way for distribution of antiretrovirals, at the same time help with education and prevention.

The first step, by the way, is for leadership to stand up and admit there is an issue. You've got to admit there's a problem. And most of the societies that we saw admitted there's a significant problem, starting with the leaders. You know, President Museveni of Uganda and President Obasanjo of Nigeria are very strong and said, "We've got an issue. Forget stigma. We've got a health issue that we must deal with as a society."

And so, in America, the first thing we do is look for willingness to participate, and we saw some strong leadership, which is really important. The attitudes are changing on the continent.

Secondly, we're looking for infrastructure, people who understand what works. You, know, there's an interesting effect with the antiretroviral drugs. It's called the Lazarus effect. And if we can get those antiretrovirals out, and people begin to—out in the country and in the cities, of course—people begin to improve, and all of a sudden, somebody sees a neighbor improving: "Well, maybe I've got hope." So hope begins to rise.

And so, we've got to get these medicines out, and we've got to get a strategy out and a plan out. And what I'm telling you is, we saw some good strategies and some good plans proposed by strong leaders, which is a very heartening thing. Our taxpayers have

got to know that when we spend that money, it's going to go to save lives.

The other key component, interestingly enough, in Africa that's going to make a huge difference is the faith-based community. The faith-based community from all religions, all walks of life, are interested in being a part of this—solving this pandemic.

And the other issue is hunger. Our country puts a billion a year up to help feed the hungry. And we're by far the most generous nation in the world when it comes to that, and I'm proud to report that. This isn't a contest of who's the most generous. I'm just telling you as an aside. [*Laughter*] We're generous. We shouldn't be bragging about it. But we are. We're very generous.

However, one of the things it seems like we've got to do is help Africa feed herself. There is no reason in the world why the great continent of Africa can't be self-sustaining in food, and not only self-sustaining; how about being—the capacity to help others eat. And it's got a great potential.

So that's the mission. The mission at home is to help those who hurt and make the vast potential of America available to every citizen. The mission abroad is to use our good heart and good conscience and not turn our back away when we see suffering.

It has been a—it's a huge honor to represent our country overseas. It is a—I am a proud American. I'm proud of what we stand for. I'm proud of our heritage. I understand we've had tough times in our history. But the thing about it is, we never get stuck in history. We always move beyond. We're always trying to improve. And we base it, our history and our decisionmaking, our future, on solid values. The first value is, we're all God's children.

May God bless you. Thank you for your time.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:27 p.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Tony Evans, Oakcliff Baptist Church, Dallas, TX; Rev. Eugene F. Rivers III, Azusa Christian Community, Dorchester, MA; President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda; and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the “Project BioShield Act of 2003”

July 16, 2003

In my State of the Union Address, I outlined a major research and production effort called Project BioShield to better protect the American people against possible bioterrorist attacks. I commend the House for passing the “Project BioShield Act of 2003.” This legislation will help spur the development and availability of next generation countermeasures against biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological weapons. I urge the Senate to act on this very important legislation.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

July 16, 2003

Dear _____:

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114), (the “Act”), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond August 1, 2003, of the right to bring action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Richard G. Lugar, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, and Tom Lantos, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.